

PRESENT TENSE

FEBRUARY 2003



CIVIL AIR PATROL
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Present Tense is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by Melanie LeMay in the Public Relations & Marketing Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala. It is posted online in PDF format each month at www.capnhq.gov.

Is there something you'd like us to cover in *Present Tense*? Contact Melanie LeMay at mlemay@capnhq.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.

the newsletter for public affairs officers

Make your photos. . .

show and tell



Photo courtesy of Tennessee Wing

TORNADO STORY – A CAP member from the Tennessee Wing caught this poignant moment on film as a cadet salvages victims' belongings after a devastating tornado swept through the area. Though the rule of thumb is to zoom in on the action, this photo works because the wide angle shows both the devastation and the extent of cleanup volunteers and victims faced.

A picture may not be worth 10,000 words – sometimes it's worth more

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

What makes a publication look dated? Compare a 1960s-era booklet to one published today and you'll instantly see the difference. Today's pieces are designed for a visually sophisticated audience. People accustomed to high-definition television and video graphics, high-resolution computer monitors and four-color newspapers won't settle any longer for a wall of black words on white paper.

Good graphic designers try to put as many "points of entry" into a story as possible, mean-

ing they entice the reader with graphics, out-quotes, info boxes and, especially, compelling photos.

By thinking photographically, you can increase the chances your press release, unit newsletter or Web site will make the cut with your audience. In today's market, you can't afford to address the visual elements of your story as an afterthought.

As soon as you know you want to cover an event, ask yourself these questions:

◆ **What is it about this event that would be visually interesting to readers?** Obviously

See Picture, page 4

Spirit of Volunteerism

PAOs, thanks for the entries you've sent so far. The contest deadline is now extended to **April 30** and entry requirements have been simplified to save you time. You can enter as many times as you like.

The Marketing and Public Relations Directorate is developing a new national marketing campaign, and we need your help.

We want to build new PR materials around testimonials from real members who are out in the field doing the work that makes us all most proud of CAP.

We're looking for people who represent the average members of CAP, people with jobs and families and other responsibilities who contribute their valuable free time to public service through CAP-related activities.

We're looking for senior and cadet members, young and old, long-time and new members.

If you have a candidate in mind, prepare an entry with the following: An explanation (no more than 1,000 words!) telling why that individual represents CAP's spirit of volunteerism, his/her contributions to CAP, information about

that person's non-CAP life and complete contact information for the individual. PLUS, we must have a color photo of this individual "in action," performing his/her duties for CAP. If we choose your entry for national publication, you win! (See box above.)

You may enter as many times as you like. Be sure

your entries reflect diversity in origin, location, background and gender.

The contest deadline has been **extended** to April 30, 2003!!

Mail entries to:

Spirit of Volunteerism Award
Melanie LeMay, PR Specialist
Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters
105 South Hansell St., Building 714
Maxwell AFB, Ala. 36112-6332
or e-mail to:
mleamay@capnhq.gov

What you can win

**Official CAP National Headquarters
Spirit of Volunteerism Award from the
Marketing and Public Relations Directorate;**

**\$100 voucher for any merchandise
from the CAP Bookstore**

Cool Web sites for writers

2003 calendar for organized writers

Download a 2003 calendar created especially for organized writers (or writers who want to be) at www.organizedwriter.com.

Treasure chest for public relations pros

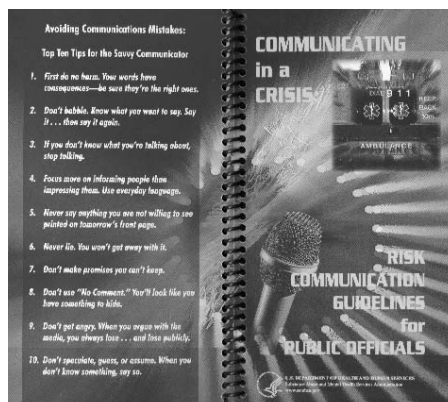
Check this Web site often for a wide variety of public relations articles and resources. Includes links to a PR article archive, a PR toolbox (tips on media relations, writing press releases, creating effective media events, etc.) and a PR desk reference library. Also entertaining are such tidbits as the "Dan Rather Rule for answering reporters" and a fascinating list of "classic PR coups and capers." This site recently was recognized by PR pros as one of the Web's most useful. Find it at www.aboutpublicrelations.net.

Journalism 101 and beyond

Here's an online resource for all things (or at least many of them) related to journalism. PAOs can find valuable info on reporting and research techniques on this site at www.journaliststoolbox.com.

Looking for *Present Tense* online?

Find an online version of *Present Tense* on CAP National Headquarters' (thankfully, soon to be redesigned) Web site at www.capnhq.gov/nhq/pa/PresentTense/.



FREE BOOK – You can order this handy primer on crisis communication (document number SMA 02-3641) free from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. This is one of the best books we've seen on dealing with the media about critical incidents. To order, write to SAMHSA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 12-105, Rockville, MD 20857. You can also download an electronic version at www.mental-health.org or call 1-800-789-2647 to order by phone.

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of 31 December 2002

Total	62,974
Cadets	26,983
Seniors	35,991
New Members	1,728
Cadets	1,074
Seniors	654
Renewals	3,081
Cadets	982
Seniors	2,099

In the calendar year 2002, CAP gained 23,574 new members, an increase of 13.7% over the number of new members for 2001.

This included 14,209 new cadets and 9,365 senior members. This is the highest number of new members gained in a single year in more than 12 years.

The retention rate for cadets in 2002 was 52%, also the highest retention rate in more than 12 years. The retention rate for senior members was 75%.

Need a CAP Fact Sheet?

Go online at www.capnhq.gov and click on "Tools for PAOs."

The automated PAO

Kentucky Wing PAO Mike Brown is spreading the word, not only to the media, but to other PAOs as well



CATCHING THE CAP WAVE is WAVE-3 TV reporter Dina Kaplan of Boston, shown here in her CAP-supplied flight suit, who covered the Kentucky Wing SAREX after talking with KYWG PAO Mike Brown.

Photo by Mike Brown

When Kentucky Wing PAO Jayson Altieri moved to Alabama last year, Michael Brown had some big shoes to fill when he took over Altieri's job. Altieri had been named the National PAO of the Year in 2002, drawing heavily upon his military experience and his specialization in public affairs.

Brown is no slouch in the marketing area himself, however. A '95 graduate of McKendree College in LeBannon, Ill., Brown holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and has worked for five years as a marketing manager.

One of his first orders of business was to pinpoint some

areas for improvement in the wing PAO program. "There was a primary problem in keeping unit-level PAOs interested and properly trained," he said. "Most unit-level PAOs seem to have been put there just to fill a vacant position, and have little or no training."

To make things easier for field PAOs in the Kentucky Wing, Brown created a PAO resource CD. On it, he included CAPP 190-1 and 190-2, the Kentucky Wing's approved and official press release format, the PAO quarterly report form and an official Kentucky media guide containing information and hot-linked e-mail addresses to tele-

vision and newspaper outlets throughout Kentucky. "The reception has been positive," he said, adding that he expects to have CDs in the hands of all 19 Kentucky squadrons by April. Producing such a CD is not difficult. CAP pamphlets 190-1 and 190-2 are available on the headquarters Web site under "Publications" and the quarterly report form is also available there through online forms. You can create a standard press release form using the formats on the headquarters Web site as a guide (see any press release under "News and Issues").

To create a media guide for

your area, consult the Yellow Pages for television and radio stations and newspapers. You can also find contact information in such reference books as *Bacon's Media Guide*, available at your local public library.

No matter where you get contact information for the media, it's a good idea to call each source and obtain the name (along with correct title and spelling) of the current editor.

Brown has already helped the Kentucky Wing get nine minutes of valuable airtime on WAVE-3 TV, the NBC affiliate in Louisville. Next month we'll look at the systematic approach he uses so successfully.

What to know about digital cameras

Part 2 - Image quality

If you plan to print your digital photos, then you must consider the resolution of your printer in order to get the best output. The rule of thumb is to divide the resolution of your printer by 2 or 4 to obtain the image resolution you'll need in your photo. For example, for a 720 dpi printer, your image file should have 360 or 180 pixels per inch. If your printer is 600 dpi, use 300 or 150 pixels per inch. Remember that the larger image will take longer to manipulate and print. Do a test run of both on your printer, examine the difference, and then decide which resolution you prefer.

Once you know the image resolution you need in pixels per inch, just multi-

ply it times the print size to determine the camera resolution you'll need. For example, for an 8" x 10" print at 180 dpi, you'll need a camera capable of shooting at least 1,800x1,440 pixels, or about 2.5 megapixels. Round this total up to compensate for any cropping you need to do.

Image quality also is affected by the quality of your lenses, any rescaling or color calculations performed by your camera and image compression. The more your image is compressed, the smaller the file size and the lower the photo quality. On the other hand, the more you compress your photos, the more you can fit on the camera's memory card before it is full.

Digital camera lenses must be of very good quality to produce good

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Check this site to find digital photography and imaging news, reviews of the latest digital cameras and accessories, discussion forums, a large selection of sample images, a digital camera buyer's guide, side-by-side comparisons and a comprehensive database of digital camera features and specifications.

images. Most lenses on lower-end cameras are of the range-finder, fixed-lens type. If you want add-on lenses, you'll have to move up to a more expensive camera.

Finally, remember that digital cameras are generally less light-sensitive than film cameras. Be sure to check out the ISO ratings of the cameras you're considering, and be sure to light your subjects adequately when shooting digital photos.

Next month: Lenses, camera speed, cards, batteries and computer transfer.

Grace under pressure

When headquarters staff faces a flurry of details and accelerating deadlines, Brandy Ratcliff is the eye of the storm

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

She moves quietly through the storm of details at most any CAP national event. So skillfully does she put out fires that few people ever know crises are blazing.

Brandy Ratcliff handles protocol and special projects for the headquarters Marketing and Public Relations Directorate, making her the "go-to" person when headquarters mounts a major conference or project with national exposure. It's not a job for the faint of heart, but Ratcliff thrives on the high-stakes game of preventing and resolving dilemmas.

For that reason, she

understands very well the challenges of PAOs who plan and execute special ceremonies, media events and public appearances.

"What most people in the field don't understand about national headquarters is that our resources are spread very thin," she said. "Actually, it is for us much like it is for PAOs out in the field. We know what it's like to try to move mountains with just a few dedicated people."

Ratcliff can be invaluable to the PAO who needs to know how to seat visiting dignitaries for a critical meeting, how to set up a color guard ceremony or produce an awards presentation. She's handled everything from ordering flags for the national com-

mander to obtaining specs for manufacturing the No. 46 diecast racecars.

"When you're in public affairs," she said, "you interact with all parts of the organization sooner or later. It pays to develop both internal and external networks to help you handle the sheer volume and variety of the demands."

Ratcliff says effective work in public affairs requires an engaging personality, creativity and persistence. She knows from experience how important those traits can be.

"Professionally, I'm most proud of my work on CAP's 60th Anniversary Gala," she said. "To plan and execute an event on that scale, in a venue like the Smithsonian, was a



Scott and Brandy Ratcliff

true achievement."

Ratcliff's personal life is a true achievement as well. Her happy marriage to husband Scott, who was formerly in active-duty Air Force and now works full-time with the U.S. Air Force Reserve, provides the stability that keeps her grounded in the midst of crisis, and helps her keep the sense of humor so valued in the pressure cooker of public affairs.

Next month: Tim Frantz on the joys of marketing

Picture, continued from page 1

an airplane makes an interesting subject, but it's even more interesting if you put people in the photo actually using that airplane for an identifiable purpose.

CAP members have an advantage in that their aircraft-related work is visually interesting to the average reader, but other CAP activities can make compelling photos, too. Try taking closeup shots of elementary school students building model rockets, cadets in the throes of physically challenging training or seniors working a SAR in a heavily wooded area.

◆ **What am I going to focus on when I write about this event?** If you're interviewing your unit commander, take some closeup shots of him as he lists tasks on a whiteboard for the assembled volunteers, adjusts the radio settings or carries

out a preflight exam. If your unit has just won an award, take a shot of unit members actually performing the activity for which they won the award, rather than shooting another humdrum "grip-and-grin" photo with members in a line, clutching their certificates. If there's no way to avoid a grip-and-grin, then consider taking the photo from an unusual angle. Climb up on a ladder and shoot down at the crowd of cadets looking up, holding their trophy aloft.

◆ **What do readers care about?**

First and foremost, readers care about *people*. They want to know about the human side of CAP, and they want photos they can identify with. They're much more likely to look at a photo of a cadet grimacing as he scales a rope challenge than a shot of that same cadet simply standing in front of a plane. To cap-

ture compelling shots of people, remember to move in close! Capture people's facial expressions and body language, and you'll capture the story.

◆ **How can this photo do double-duty?** The headquarters Marketing and Public Relations Directorate is always on the lookout for good photos. We use them in promotional pieces and send them to national publications when the editors ask for photos of members in the field. Because our own staff is limited in funding and travel time, we depend on PAOs in the field to send us their best photos. When you shoot an especially engaging photo, send it to us electronically, along with complete cutline information, for our photo archive.

Next month: Write compelling cutlines for your photos